

Lake Roosevelt

National
Recreation
Area

Newsletter 2 • December 1997 • General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement

Planning for the Future of Lake Roosevelt

First of all it was a busy summer here at Lake Roosevelt. After a cool spring, we had great weather and the reservoir returned to nearly full pool by mid-June despite being drawn down to its lowest level in almost 15 years during the winter and early spring. We estimate that visitation to the National Recreation Area during 1997 will be approximately 1,300,000 visitors which is comparable to the last 5-year average.

As we indicated to you in our first newsletter, we conducted public scoping meetings this summer to identify issues and concerns that should be addressed in the new general management plan. The meetings were held in Coulee Dam, Davenport, Wellpinit, Kettle Falls, Republic, Nespelem, Spokane, Richland, Seattle, and Wenatchee. The attendance at the meetings, as we expected, was heavier in the local areas and Spokane and sparser as we went further afield. The issues that we heard covered a broad spectrum and we have summarized them for you later in the newsletter.

We conducted a Desired Futures Workshop with the staff and our inter-governmental planning partners in October. Later in the newsletter we will provide a discussion of desired futures and their importance. We will also share the statements that were developed in the October workshops.

We have also included another comment form in this newsletter to provide you with the opportunity to comment on our progress so far. Please let us know if you think that we are on the right track or where you think that we may have missed the mark.

I would like to thank everyone who came out to the scoping meetings and to those of you who took the time to respond to the comment forms that were included in the first newsletter. Your comments are very valuable and we need your continued participation for the planning process to succeed.



Vaughn Baker, Superintendent

Results of Public Scoping

Public scoping meetings were held earlier this summer in Coulee Dam, Davenport, Wellpinit, Kettle Falls, Republic, Nespelem, Spokane, Richland, Seattle, and Wenatchee. In addition to the public scoping meetings, we also mailed out approximately 1000 newsletters and distributed an equal number through our offices, meetings, campfires, and bulletin boards.

The issues and concerns identified were broad and far ranging. There was disagreement on some issues and general agreement on others. There were also some definite trends of issues among user groups. Adjacent property owners, for instance, expressed their concerns about access to the water and NPS policies concerning private uses of the public shoreline. Visitors who had to drive further distances to get to the lake were more concerned about crowding and adequacy of facilities at developed locations.

MANAGEMENT OF THE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA — The opinion that local governments should play more of a role in the management of the NRA was expressed. Some people are unhappy with the NPS style of management and especially those policies resulting from the *1990 Lake Roosevelt Special Use Management Plan* which has begun the termination of permits that allowed private uses of the public lands such as private docks, yards, grazing, and agricultural uses. Some people expressed the opinion that they thought the NPS enforcement of regulations was overzealous and that the regulations themselves are overly complex. They expressed the opinion that the NPS was trying to manage Lake Roosevelt similarly to the way a national park is managed. There was discussion about the Columbia Basin Act and how some of its provisions might apply to NPS management of the recreation area in relation to grazing and agriculture.

Other people said that they thought the way the NPS manages the recreation area is just fine and they hoped that it would continue to be managed in the same fashion. Some people said that they thought that the Park Service was lax in its enforcement of the regulations. They were concerned about the past practices of the Park Service that permitted private uses on public land and said that they should be terminated immediately.

LAKE ACCESS — Access to the water was an issue that was often mentioned. People are concerned about the lack of access to the water during periods of extreme draw downs, such as we experienced during the last two winters and springs. They felt that either existing launch ramps should be extended or that new ramps should be constructed. People are concerned with the crowding that happens on weekends at popular facilities such as Porcupine Bay and Keller Ferry. Their primary areas of concern are a lack of camping spaces and crowding of launch ramps. Many adjoining landowners complained about the lack of

convenient facilities for their use. They mentioned that often they must drive 30 miles or more just to launch their boats and when they do get to the launch ramps, they are often crowded. They expressed the desire for more community based facilities to address the needs of the growing population of people who live around the lake. Some people also expressed the need for better access to the water for the disabled.

BOATING — There was a lot of discussion of boating. Many people feel that the level of boating and the quality of the experience are just fine and that no major changes in management are needed. Others felt that there are too many people who do not respect the regulations and create safety problems by speeding and operating their crafts in an unsafe manner. They felt that the NPS should step up its enforcement. Personal watercraft, such as jet skis, and other high speed craft were discussed. Again, there was disagreement. Some feel that they are noisy, unsafe, polluting, and that they should be controlled more. Others feel that they are not really a problem at this time. Generally it appears that most people think that despite some problem areas, the level of boating activity on the lake is acceptable and that due to the size of the reservoir there is still room for visitors to seek and find whatever type of experience that they prefer. Noise was identified as a problem in confined spaces such as the Spokane Arm of the lake.

HOUSEBOATS — Houseboats were mentioned often. The general opinion seems to be that the present level of use should be the maximum. The primary concerns were the impacts to the shorelines from the large parties on the boats and the visual impact of the houseboats themselves.

FACILITY DEVELOPMENT — Many people feel that the proposed marina at Crescent Bay is still needed and should be constructed as soon as possible. There was a general expression that the lack of facilities on the water at the south end of the lake is adversely affecting visitation. Most of the discussions of facilities dealt with the crowding and lack of adequate facilities rather than the type of facilities. The scarcity of fueling points on the water, adequate moorage, stores for groceries and supplies, etc. were also identified as problems. The need for docks to provide access to commercial facilities such as restaurants, golf courses, etc. was mentioned. The problems associated with the lack of deep water moorage at the Kettle Falls marina were identified.

ENVIRONMENT — There was a lot of discussion about the operation of the reservoir and its impact on the fishery. There was general agreement that the extreme draw downs were detrimental and more should be done to enhance the fishery. There was discussion about the impacts that visitors were having on the shoreline. The primary problems identified were trash and sanitation related to human waste. Some concern was expressed about pollution from heavy metals on the Spokane Arm and the upper

Columbia. Many people were concerned about the whole environment and wanted to make sure that the clear water, clean sand beaches, and picturesque scenery were maintained. The perceived danger of starting wildfires from campfires on the beach was mentioned frequently.

Scope of the General Management Plan



A General Management Plan:

- Provides general direction and basic management philosophy
- Identifies resources, management, and visitor use strategies and actions
- Can identify park infrastructure requirements, functions, and locations
- Satisfies statutory and policy requirements
- Identifies funding and staffing requirements
- Does not guarantee funding
- Will not solve all problems

Several issues raised during scoping would require legislation to modify the existing authorities of the Secretary of the Interior as delegated to the National Park Service for managing Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area. Some of the proposals that would require specific authorization from Congress include: a change in managing entity to an organization other than the National Park Service; shared management with other governmental entities; and private uses of publicly owned lands (e.g., lawns, agriculture, private docks and access to the lake, etc.). Because the GMP is an administrative document which outlines how the NPS would manage an area within existing laws and regulations, these issues are considered to be beyond

the scope of the GMP. This does not diminish the importance of these issues to the people that raised them; it is an acknowledgement that the NPS does not have the authority to approve such changes in management or activities without specific authorization from Congress. These issues will be identified in the GMP as having been raised during the scoping process for consideration by the appropriate decision makers. Another issue identified during scoping is grazing within the NRA. The current NPS position, as reflected in the 1990 *Special Use Management Plan*, is that it does not have the authority to permit grazing on the public lands. The Department of Interior solicitor is reviewing the laws to determine if any additional NPS authority exists.

Other issues raised that are outside the scope of the GMP generally fall into four broad categories: jurisdiction of other agencies, operational, implementation, and a lack of data.

The operation of the reservoir and deep draw downs negative effect on recreational use of the reservoir were mentioned. While complicated, the gist of the matter is that lake level decisions are made by other agencies; the Corps of Engineers for flood control; the Bonneville Power Administration for power production; the Bureau of Reclamation for irrigation; and a host of interests for fisheries mitigation. The Park Service remains an advocate for recreation use on the lake, but has no authority to change the policies of the other federal agencies.

Law enforcement, debris removal, weed control, maintenance, safety, and similar issues were discussed. These ongoing issues are related more towards funding and staffing than management policy. These issues are addressed through annual funding requests and budgets.

There was detailed discussion about specific facilities or developments on the lake. While the GMP will discuss the types, levels of development, and locations of facilities, it generally will not go into detail at any one site. This is usually accomplished through detailed site plans that are prepared for the implementation of specific recommendations in the GMP and depends upon the availability of funding to plan and construct the new facility. However, as a part of this process, we will prepare an in-depth analysis of the Kettle Falls area and make suggestions for any new development that may be necessary and appropriate.

Issues were identified where the data needed to make a recommendation in the GMP may not be available. These issues will be identified and decisions deferred until the necessary studies can be completed. The issue of personal watercraft probably fits this category. There was discussion on both sides, but no firm information on which to base a decision.

Area Purpose & Significance

As previously stated in **Newsletter No. 1**, purpose statements clarify the reasons why the area was established and is managed as a unit of the national park system. Significance statements provide details that describe the primary ideas, events, and resources that make the area important. Together, they provide a framework which we can use to evaluate all of our subsequent actions to ensure that they are consistent with the original reasons for creating a national recreation area at Lake Roosevelt.

The purpose of **Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area** is to:

- Provide opportunities for diverse, safe, quality outdoor recreation experiences for the public

- Preserve, conserve, and protect the integrity of its natural, cultural, and scenic resources
- Provide opportunities to enhance public appreciation and understanding about the area's significant resources

Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area is significant because:

- It offers a wide variety of recreation opportunities in a diverse natural setting on a 150 mile long lake bordered by 300 miles of publicly owned shoreline available for public use
- It contains the Columbia River and a record of continuous human occupation dating back 9000 years
- It contains two distinctive physiographic provinces: the Okanogan Highlands, and the Columbia Plateau, which have been sculpted by the ice age floods



Trends

At the Desired Futures Workshop held in October, we attempted to define some of the primary trends that affected the recreation area 15 years ago, what those same trends are today, and what they might be 15 years from now. We felt that this information was useful to us in the development of the desired futures and we thought that you might be interested in them.

	1982: 15 Years Ago	1997: Today	2012: 15 Years from Now
VISITATION	700,000 visitors/year	1.3 million visitors/year	1.5 to 1.7 million visitors/year
MARINAS	2 small marinas	4 marinas	5 or more marinas
CONGESTION ON WATER	Little or no congestion on lake	Congestion on lake in a few areas on weekends and holidays	Same as 97
CONGESTION ON LAND	Some crowding at facilities	Crowding at boat launch facilities even though there are more facilities now than in 82	Same as 97
REPUTATION	Perceived as a “locals” lake	Perceived as a “regional” lake	Same as 97
CAMPING	Easy to get campsites anytime	Easy to get weekday campsites – weekends and holidays fill early	More demand for camping, longer season, both weekday and weekend use, increasing demands on undeveloped areas
FEES	Few facility fees	Fees for launching and camping – visitor expectations increase	Increasingly fee dependent (flat federal budgets)
TYPE OF RECREATION USE	Boating, fishing, skiing, swimming	Recreation use same as 82 plus house boats, personal watercraft, and more large high speed boats	Recreation use same as 97 plus new technology
CHARACTER OF SURROUNDING LANDS	Surrounding land predominately agricultural	Agricultural use and rural subdivisions	Continued adjacent residential development and pressure for new commercial development to meet residents needs
LEVEL OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN SURROUNDING AREA	Little or no private commercial development	Some commercial development – casinos, golf courses, motels, campgrounds	Continued commercial development, guide services, eco-tourism
MANAGEMENT OF LAKE ROOSEVELT	Tri-party Agreement Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service	5 party agreement – Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, Colville and Spokanes Tribes	Same as 97, plus additional coordination with counties
ENVIRONMENT	Source point pollutants of air and water	Improved air and water quality from mitigation	Air and water quality are as good as 97 or better
FISHERY	Walleye is principal sport fish species; self sustaining for the most part	Fishery – adversely affected by draw downs; switch to trout & kokanee, net pens & hatcheries required to sustain fishery	Fishery continues to improve, restoration of some salmon habitat
DRAW DOWNS	Draw downs for flood control	Draw downs for flood control & fisheries mitigation	Same as 97

Desired Futures

Desired Futures are broad statements that define what the recreation area and the visitor's experience should be like at the end of the 15 to 20 year planning period. They should reflect the area's purpose and significance. They should also respond to the issues and concerns that were identified during scoping. Alternative management strategies to achieve the desired futures will be developed and the desired futures will be used as goals to evaluate the alternatives.

Based upon the results of scoping and discussions and evaluation of trends with the park staff and planning partners during the desired futures workshop conducted on October 28-29, 1997, it was apparent that there were not significant differences in visions for the future of the recreation area among the various participants. Almost everyone shared a common view of what the recreation should be or become within the next 15 to 20 years and their ideas are summarized in the following statements.

QUALITY AND VARIETY OF THE RECREATION

EXPERIENCE: Lake Roosevelt offers opportunities for a wide range of high quality outdoor recreation experiences varying from active recreation centered upon developed public facilities to passive recreation and secluded areas based upon a relatively undeveloped and protected public shoreline environment. It continues to maintain its reputation as a destination vacation area for visitors from all parts of the Pacific-Northwest.

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION: Visitors are contacted in meaningful ways and come away from their Lake Roosevelt experience with a broad understanding and appreciation of the area and its resources, safety issues, and a knowledge of how each visitor can participate in the protection of Lake Roosevelt's resources for future generations. The stories of indigenous cultures, the geology of the area, the impact of the Ice Age Floods, and the history of the area after the arrival of the white man are told and interpreted in a factual, respectful manner.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: The natural, cultural, and scenic resources of Lake Roosevelt are protected and maintained to levels that ensure the quality of the visitor experience and integrity of the environment are not compromised.

OPERATIONS: Sufficient human and fiscal resources are available so that all programs of the NRA can be staffed and supported at levels that allow them to complete their missions in a manner that satisfies visitors' expectations for a high quality recreational experience. Relations with park neighbors and other managing partners are conducted in a professional and cordial manner.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Please take a look at the following schedule. You will see that we are still on target (step 3) to produce the draft plan in the Fall of 1998 as we indicated in our first newsletter. This winter, in consultation with our inter-governmental planning partners, we will develop alternative management strategies to achieve the desired futures. We will also be working to produce the other sections of the document that are needed for our analysis and to fulfill the requirements for an environmental impact statement under the terms of the National Environmental Policy Act. During the spring and over the summer, we will refine the alternatives and evaluate each of them so that we can describe their impacts and effects on the environment. We will then have a draft plan which we can take to the public for their comments and input.



How You Can Help!

Please take some time to fill in the enclosed **comment** form and let us know your thoughts on how well you think that we're doing. Let us know if there are things that need to be clarified, issues that still have not been identified, or any other problems that you may have with our process. If you would like to speak to someone in person, please contact Harold Gibbs, our planning coordinator.

Harold can be reached by telephone
at 509-633-9441 extension 131,
or if you wish by email
at Harold_Gibbs@nps.com.

This newsletter will also be available soon
on the NPS web site at:
<http://www.nps.gov/planning/current.htm>

General Management Plan Steps & Schedule

1	<p>Set the Stage for Planning and Management Fall 96 – Summer 97</p> <p>This first phase of the process lays the foundation for everything that is done in the plan and, ultimately, in the national recreation area (NRA). Statements of park purpose and significance are developed to ensure that everything we do protects NRA resources and values and is consistent with the reasons Lake Roosevelt NRA was established. During this phase, issues and concerns that need to be addressed in the plan are also identified. This helps to focus our work and determines the scope of the planning effort.</p>	<p>Planning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reaffirm area purposes – Reaffirm area significance – Identify issues and concerns (scoping) <p>Opportunities for Public Input:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Participate in public scoping meetings – Read and comment on newsletters
2	<p>Gather Data and Develop Alternative Futures Summer 97 – Fall 97</p> <p>The planning team will be working to better understand the resources and experiences of the area, learn more about issues and problems, identify opportunities for resolving problems, and develop ideas for the future of the area.</p>	<p>Planning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Gather and analyze resource and visitor use information – Identify desired futures <p>Opportunities for Public Input:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Read and comment on newsletter
3	<p>Publish Draft GMP/EIS Fall 97 – Fall 98</p> <p>Alternative management strategies for achieving the desired future will be developed and the potential environmental consequences of each alternative will be evaluated. The draft general management plan/environmental impact statement will be published late in 1998. The draft will be placed on public review, during which time comments on the draft will be accepted.</p>	<p>Planning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Describe the area and resources – Develop alternative strategies for achieving the desired future – Describe the consequences of the alternatives – Publish the draft plan <p>Opportunities for Public Involvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Participate in open houses and meetings – Read and comment on draft plan
4	<p>Publish Final GMP/EIS Spring 99 – Fall 99</p> <p>Based on public comments, appropriate revisions to the draft will be made and a final plan/EIS developed. We anticipate that the final plan will be available in the spring of 1999. A Record of Decision documenting the area's final decisions in the general management plan will be issued after the final plan is published.</p>	<p>Planning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Analyze public comments – Make revisions and develop final plan – Issue Record of Decision <p>Opportunities for Public Involvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Read the final plan
5	<p>Implement Plan Fall 99 and beyond</p>	